



**State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
Tennessee State Library and Archives**

**“Memorial of the First Baptist Church, 1820-1863”  
[handwritten manuscripts of R.B.C. Howell]**

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**COLLECTION SUMMARY**

**Creator:**

Howell, Robert Boyte C. (Robert Boyte Crawford), 1801-1868

**Inclusive Dates:**

1820-1863

**Scope & Content:**

Consists of two volumes of R.B.C. Howell's "Memorial of the First Baptist Church," a handwritten manuscript on the history of First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, written during Howell's imprisonment in Nashville during the Civil War. Volume 1 is believed to be Howell's original manuscript, housed at the church since its writing; Volume 2 was discovered in private hands in 2011 and acquired by the church. It is a slightly different version of the same manuscript but written in Howell's hand. It is possible that he recopied his work at a later date with some editing. The manuscript recounts the history of First Baptist Nashville from its organization in 1820 through 1863, the time of Howell's writing.

Also included as introductory information are exhibit materials kept by the church's History Committee relating to R.B.C. Howell, his family, and his career as pastor. These items include photographs and document copies with their exhibit caption cards.

**Physical Description/Extent:**

2 volumes & 1 folder

**Accession/Record Group Number:**

Mf. 1997

**Language:**

English

**Permanent Location:**

Mf. 1997 (available only on microfilm)

**Repository:**

Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee, 37243-0312

**Administrative/Biographical History**

R.B.C. Howell was the fourth pastor of First Baptist Nashville, serving from 1834 to 1849 and again from 1858 to 1867. Born in 1801 in Wayne County, N.C., he was educated at Columbian College in Washington, D.C. He began preaching in 1825 and was ordained in 1827 in Norfolk, Va., where he was pastor until moving to First Baptist Church in Nashville in 1834. In 1850 he began a 7-year stint at Second Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., returning to First Baptist Nashville in 1857.

Among other accomplishments at First Baptist Church in Nashville, Howell began the first Sunday School, led the construction of the church's second building on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, initiated publication of *The Baptist* newspaper, wrote and published numerous books, helped petition for the charter of incorporation of the Southern Baptist Convention, and served as Vice President of the University of Nashville and President of the Nashville Female Academy. Howell was imprisoned by Tennessee's Military Governor, Andrew Johnson, during the Civil War, along with many other Nashville ministers who refused to take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States. He died in 1868 and is buried at Nashville's historic Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

**Organization/Arrangement of Materials**

Introductory materials followed by the two manuscript volumes.

**Conditions of Access and Use****Restrictions on Access:**

None

**Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:**

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## **Index Terms**

### **Personal Names:**

Howell, Robert Boyte C. (Robert Boyte Crawford), 1801-1868 -- Written works  
Howell family

### **Corporate Names/Organizations/Government Bodies:**

First Baptist Church (Nashville, Tenn.) -- History -- 19<sup>th</sup> century -- Sources

### **Subjects:**

Baptists -- Clergy -- Tennessee -- Nashville -- 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Baptists -- History -- Tennessee -- Nashville -- 19<sup>th</sup> century

### **Geographic Names:**

Nashville (Tenn.) -- Church history -- 19<sup>th</sup> century

## **Acquisition and Appraisal**

### **Provenance and Acquisition:**

Loaned by First Baptist Nashville History Committee for microfilming.

## **Processing and Administrative Information**

### **Preferred Citation:**

"Memorial of the First Baptist Church, 1820-1863" [handwritten manuscripts of R.B.C. Howell], Tennessee State Library & Archives

### **Processing Information:**

Reviewed and prepared by Cathi Carmack, Archival Technical Services Section, April 2012.

**Existence and Location of Originals:**

Owned by First Baptist Church, 108 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203.

**Electronic Location and Access:**

<http://www.tn.gov/tsla/history/manuscripts/findingaids/mf1997.pdf>

## CONTAINER LIST

Contents/Item Title	Date	Box/Folder
Introductory exhibit materials	Undated	Folder 1
Memorial of the First Baptist Church, 1820-1863, Vol. 1	1863	Box 1
Memorial of the First Baptist Church, 1820-1863, Vol. 2	After 1863?	Box 2